

and English Canada. However, throughout the book, Rifkind emphasizes that *Comrades and Critics* is a study of English Canada only. The reason for this decision is not clearly communicated to the reader and thus begs the question: What about women in French Canada? A simple footnote explaining the decision to focus only on English Canada could have addressed this issue. Second, in her analysis of women, literature, and the left, Rifkind relies heavily on Ian McKay's work on Canadian socialism, without adequately situating his research in relation to the broader historiography. For example, she writes "McKay breaks with historiographical tradition to propose a different starting point for understanding socialism in Canada, one that sets aside factional disputes over the time, place, or personalities of authentic Marxism in favour of interrogating the broader project of the Canadian left in the twentieth century" (6). This statement is supported with a reference to McKay; however, no reference is made to any specific examples of the previous "historiographical tradition" with which McKay's work supposedly breaks. While lengthy discursive footnotes can be dry and cumbersome, situating research in relation to previous works is a crucial part of producing responsible and informed scholarship.

These criticisms aside, *Comrades and Critics* nevertheless provides an important analysis of leftist women's literary contributions during the 1930s, and is thus an important addition to the historiographies on Canadian literature, and on women and the left in Canada.

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**Ian McKay and Robin Bates, *In The Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2010).**

Ian McKay is one of Canada's most prolific and well-respected historians. Among his diverse body of work is a series of attempts to deal with the views of Nova Scotia's past of organic intellectuals. So, when I saw this most recent book, I immediately wondered how *In the Province of History* differed from his highly-regarded *Quest of the Folk* and his earlier essays on Peggy's Cove, the tourist gaze and the imagined Scottishness of Nova Scotia. As he tells the reader in a footnote, this volume (and another book yet to come) is an installment in his not yet completed study of the creation of a past for Nova Scotia that was useful as a tourist destination and supporting the racial and economic status quo.

Something of the evolution of McKay's thought can be gleaned from his theoretical debts, although his work cannot be reduced to playing out other's theories. Early on he was reading (among many dozens of other historians) Raymond Williams on the representations of the rural pastoral and Hobsbawm and Ranger

on the *Invention of Tradition*. Soon he was reading David Lowenthal's *The Past is a Foreign Country*, and Patrick Wright's *On Living in an Old Country*, books that opened many eyes to the differences between "heritage" (the commodity) and "history" (the critical view of the past). But McKay seems to have been a little uncomfortable with these British scholars' pretensions to knowing better than the "folk" what their real history was. By 1994 he was thinking along the lines sketched by Jackson Lears, and emphasizing the ways that anti-modernist intellectuals intervened in culture. McKay's analysis of such in *Quest of the Folk* earned him a new audience that was more attuned to the new cultural history than the labour history which McKay had written in graduate school. He was not left behind when his younger contemporaries took the linguistic turn. Of course, McKay has consistently returned to the insights of Gramsci, emphasizing that how we think of the past is important because it justifies the present day distribution of wealth and power, and that conception of the past is contested. That is where the most recent book fits.

McKay and his collaborator Robin Bates assert that a critical inquiry into the past can provide a useful explication of racial, class and sexual dynamics of power. History (as a critical engagement with evidence from the past), they suggest, is superior to heritage (the celebration or commodification of decontextualized representations of the past) in that it can help us make the world a more humane place. No argument from me on that point, but the body of the text does not argue the point asserted in the conclusion, nor does it provide a critical history of Nova Scotia, as it might have done to illustrate how history should be written. Instead, the book examines, in great detail, some of the narratives of the past that held sway for earlier generations and finds them wanting. There is a chapter, for example, on how Longfellow's "Evangeline" was contested, celebrated and commemorated in ways that bore little relationship to the past lives of real Acadians. There are also studies of the literature of Will R. Bird (which readers of the journal *Acadiensis* will have encountered before) and Thomas Raddall, both of whom reflected their class and ethnicity and sexuality in their imaginings of a Nova Scotia past.

When McKay and Bates return to the construction of a Scottish identity, which draws upon material McKay published in *Acadiensis* in the 1980s, they emphasize more than just the use of invented traditions to market the province to tourists. This account argues for the racist underpinnings of the choice to exclude Acadians, people of African ancestry, Mi'kmaq and other ethnic groups, that was implicit in the choice to portray the province as more Scottish than Scotland. Similarly, this book is attentive to the ways that gender roles and heterosexual norms are reinforced by the literature. Those familiar with McKay's *Rebels, Reds, Radicals* will recognize his openness to rethinking the nature of being *left*; away from privileging class and toward seeing many inequalities and oppressions as the object of leftist analysis. They conclude that the imagined past of Nova Scotia was

useful as commodities to sell to tourists, but it was wrong. More seriously, the mythology makes contemporary awareness of problems in the province more difficult to address.

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**Blair L. M. Kelley, *Right to Ride: Streetcar Boycotts and African American Citizenship in the Era of Plessy v. Ferguson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).**

Blair L. M. Kelley's *Right to Ride* is the first comprehensive study of the streetcar boycott movement. This was an early movement (1899-1906) to combat the indignity that emerged with the introduction of segregated seating on electric streetcars in the South. All Southern cities with a significant black population organized boycotts and legal cases to combat state-wide Jim Crow laws specifically targeting streetcars. Kelly selected New Orleans, Richmond and Savannah as cities that represent the broad trends of this movement and its impact.

Kelley rightly concludes that this movement was not a fruitless effort to end Jim Crow as August Meier and Elliott Rudwick concluded over forty years ago, but this was one link in a long chain of grass roots protest that stretched back to the early 19th century and continued on through the moment when Rosa Parks refused to give her seat up for a white passenger in Montgomery. Kelley makes an important contribution to our understanding of the long Civil Rights Movement and may be the first author to place its origin in the antebellum North. Kelley also demonstrates how these movements were indicative of racial, class and gender divisions within the black and white communities in these cities, all of which Kelley effectively depicts throughout the book.

Although Kelley challenges us to rethink the chronology of the Civil Rights Movement, the place and context within this history could be more developed. For example, why do New Orleans, Savannah and Richmond make the best examples for understanding this movement rather than Nashville, Jacksonville, Augusta and Atlanta all of which had rich stories and outcomes different than the three cities studied here? The book also begins with the earliest Jim Crow transportation cases we know of, that of Frederick Douglass on a train in the 1840s and Elizabeth Jennings on a Brooklyn horse-car in 1854. These incidents along with some others from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century help the reader to understand that these transportation protest have a long history, but Kelley is just really pointing to the early cases as examples and not connecting these movements to a continuity of urban transportation protest concluding with the streetcar cases at the turn of the twentieth century. It would have been helpful to integrate that long story into this study in more than one chapter or mention it more briefly and explain why the